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Ṣirāṭ Link

A path for connecting with the Creator, others, and one's self

ḤAYĀT

KINDNESS OF THE AWAITED

THE UNKNOWN PARTNER

THE GUIDING SPIRIT

Letter from MOULANA ABIDI

Salāmun ʿalaykum,

May Allah (swt) bless us, our families, and our communities.

Our sincerest condolences to the Imām of our time, Imām al-Mahdī (ʿaj), our great Marājiʿ and scholars, the Muslim Ummah, and all the believers on the Arbaʿīn of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and the shuhadāʾ of Karbalāʾ.

On the 20th of Ṣafar, the caravan of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) arrived in Karbalāʾ, returning from Damascus. On this day, Jābir ibn ʿAbdullāh al-Anṣārī performed the first visit, *ziyārah*, of the grave of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). When Jābir was pouring out his heart to Imām Zaynul ʿĀbidīn (ʿa), he said, "My Imām! Only a few people are with you and *ḥaqq* today." The Imām (ʿa) replied, "Don't look at just today; I see that the ones who support *ḥaqq* in the future are many." He was talking about us! Today, no one is talking about Yazīd or those who fought against Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). Instead, tens of millions of people visit the shrine of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and the martyrs in Karbalāʾ on Arbaʿīn. It is one of the largest gatherings in the world, even larger than *Ḥajj*.

Table of CONTENTS

02 Kindness of the Awaited
04 The Unknown Partner
06 The Guiding Spirit
10 Personal Progress Tracker
12 A Whispered Prayer
14 Entertainment
16 Ask an ʿĀlim
18 Transliteration Guide

Ṣirāṭ Link
A 2nd Chance Books Publication

وَيُطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ
مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا

For the love of Him, they feed the needy, the orphan, and the prisoner.
(Noble Qurʾān 76:8)

2nd Chance Books is a non-profit organization that was founded in order to assist incarcerated Muslims by providing them with educational materials, tools for rehabilitation, and a support system. By responding to their numerous questions about Islam, they gain a more thorough understanding of the religion. So far, 2nd Chance has distributed over 20,000 books to inmates across the country.

Among 2nd Chance's most recent initiatives is Ṣirāṭ Link, a quarterly magazine. The title Ṣirāṭ Link, inspired by the Arabic term Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm which means the right path, presents this magazine as a means of guidance for a better connection to Allah (swt), as well as offering the opportunity for connections with the broader community, and the improvement of one's self. Inshāʾ Allāh it can also serve as an opportunity for growing one's faith through education.

This magazine will be under the guidance and oversight of Moulana Nabi Raza Mir Abidi, Resident ʿĀlim of SABA Center, and several other scholars and experts.

In the case one cannot physically go to Karbalāʾ, Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī (ʿa) has said that there are five signs of a *muʾmin* (believer), one of which is reciting the *ziyārah* of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) on Arbaʿīn.[1] Among the other four signs are, praying 51 units (*rakaʿāt*) of *Ṣalāh* (per day – 17 of which are the obligatory prayers and 34 which are the recommended daily prayers), wearing a ring on the right hand (an ʿaqīq ring), placing the head on the earth during prostration (*sujūd*) in prayer, and openly pronouncing *"Bismillāhir Raḥmānir Raḥīm"* when reciting the two sūrahs in the *Ṣalāh*.

Imām Ḥusayn's stance had specific objectives and the foremost of them being upholding the true and dignified version of Islam that Allah (swt) had brought through Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ). In *Ziyārat Arbaʿīn*, the supplicant bears witness to Allah (swt) about Imām Ḥusayn's level of servitude and his status before his Lord, then says the following of the Imām (ʿa):

وَبَذَلَ مُهْجَتَهُ فِيكَ

Wa badhala muhjatahu fīka

And (he) sacrificed his soul for You

لِيَسْتَنْقِذَ عِبَادَكَ مِنَ ٱلْجَهَالَةِ

li-yastanqidhu ʿibādaka minal-jahālati

to save Your servants from ignorance

وَحَيْرَةِ ٱلضَّلاَلَةِ

wa ḥayratiḍ-ḍalālati

and from the perplexity of straying off.

The day of ʿĀshūrāʾ was to help us come out of the darkness of ignorance and into the light of guidance. The day of Arbaʿīn is a renewal of our promise to stay with *ḥaqq*, and to show that we have not gone back into the darkness.

We pray that Allah (swt) gives us the tawfīq to actualize our duties and responsibilities.

With duʿās

Nabi R. Mir (Abidi)

Resident ʿĀlim of SABA Islamic Center

1 Ḥadīqat ash-Shīʿah, Vol. 2, P. 194

SIGNIFICANT DAYS

Islamic Date	Event	Gregorian Date*
FOR THE MONTH OF DHUL QAʿDAH		
29th	Death anniversary of Imām Muḥammad at-Taqī al-Jawād (ʿa)	June 7th, 2024
FOR THE MONTH OF DHUL ḤIJJAH		
9th	Day of ʿArafah	June 16th, 2024
10th	Eidul Aḍḥā	June 17th, 2024
15th	Birth anniversary of Imām ʿAlī al-Hādī an-Naqī (ʿa)	June 22nd, 2024
18th	Eidul Ghadīr	June 25th, 2024
20th	Birth anniversary of Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim (ʿa)	June 27th, 2024
24th	Eidul Mubāhalah	July 1st, 2024
FOR THE MONTH OF MUḤARRAM		
9th	Eve of ʿĀshūrāʾ- Tāsūʿāʾ	July 15th, 2024
10th	Day of ʿĀshūrāʾ: death anniversary of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), male family members, and companions	July 16th, 2024
25th	Death anniversary of Imām ʿAlī as-Sajjād (ʿa)	July 31st, 2024
FOR THE MONTH OF ṢAFAR		
17th	Death anniversary of Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā (ʿa)	August 22nd, 2024
20th	Arbaʿīn of Imām Ḥusayn(ʿa)	August 25th, 2024

*Please note the above Gregorian dates are only estimates; as these dates are subject to change based on moon-sighting, since the Islamic dates are according to the lunar calendar.

The Kindness of the Awaited

There is a famous story shared amongst the lovers of the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa) that we will recount here. It is one of hope, courage, and ultimately, taqwā. There was a man named ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib Akbar, who lived in a village in the southern region of Iran. He was a mechanic by trade, but also a father, a believer, and someone who was striving toward Allah (swt).

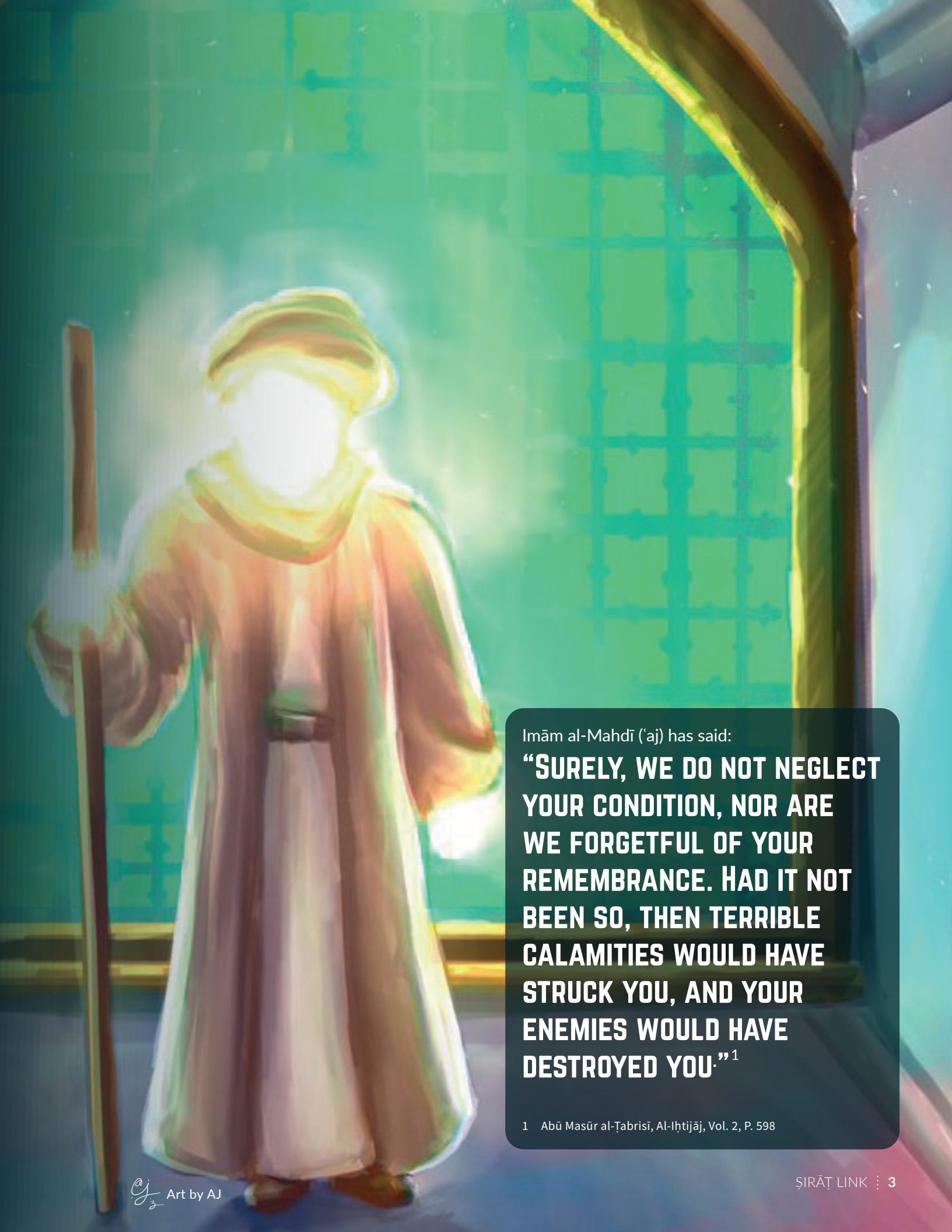
This man's life was brief, but full of servitude to Allah (swt). He was known to be kind, religious, and well-mannered. However, he was not without challenges. He was deaf and mute, and due to this, he struggled to communicate effectively. Unfortunately, many individuals around him didn't take him seriously. To add insult to injury, some would approach him to talk, and then they would laugh and mock him. In general, he was under-appreciated and undervalued despite his sincerity and piety. It was in these difficult circumstances that he developed a strong bond with the Imām of our time, Imām Mahdī (ʿaj). His pious actions earned him a special friendship, a beautiful example to reflect upon.

At that time, Iran was engaged in a war, and sadly, a cousin of ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib was martyred in the way of Allah (swt). When his blessed body was brought back, ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib and friends of the martyr went to the graveyard to mourn their loss. ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib, who didn't speak much, tried to communicate an important message to them. He was struggling to get the words out, and it was difficult for them to understand him, so as usual, they just ignored him. In a desperate attempt, he began drawing in the dirt next to his cousin's resting place— it was the shape of a grave. This caught the attention of a couple friends, who began looking at his drawing. He began writing, "This is the grave of Shahīd (martyr) ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib Akbar." Reading this, the friends began laughing and teasing him. "What is ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib talking about now? He's saying he is going to be shahīd!"

When he saw their reaction, he disheartedly lowered his head and became quiet. He erased the drawing in the sand and left. No one paid much attention. A short time after, ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib and a few other brothers went to the battlefront. It wasn't his first time, but this time was different. Alas, he was martyred and returned to Allah (swt). It didn't take long for the news to spread in his village, and everyone became overwhelmed with grief, especially his friends and loved ones. Surely enough, he was buried right next to his cousin. It was then that his friends realized that he had shown them where his grave was going to be!

However, what was even more extraordinary was his last will and testament! He talked about how lonely and unimportant he felt. He mentioned how he would be mocked and made fun of. He would try to communicate, but he really felt he had no one. Instead, he developed a close relationship with a friend that no one knew of. Understanding the status of this man, it is clear that he didn't mention this special secret to speak highly of himself. Rather, he was trying to teach everyone a lesson. What was the lesson? He was drawing a connection between himself and Imām Mahdī (ʿaj) that could too be available to others. ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib Akbar didn't have anyone to talk to and share his innermost thoughts with, so he used to talk to Imām Mahdī (ʿaj) all the time, and it paid off! Imām al-Mahdī (ʿaj) became his closest friend and confidante. He revealed to him that he would be a shahīd, and that is where his grave would be.

To strengthen your relationship with the Imām of our time (ʿaj), consider speaking to him everyday, making supplication for his well-being, and being considerate of your spiritual progress. We pray for the arrival of the awaited Imām (ʿaj) and to be with him on the path of truth.



Imām al-Mahdī (ʿaj) has said:

"Surely, we do not neglect your condition, nor are we forgetful of your remembrance. Had it not been so, then terrible calamities would have struck you, and your enemies would have destroyed you."[1]

1 Abū Masūr al-Ṭabrisī, Al-Iḥtijāj, Vol. 2, P. 598

Art by AJ

My final message to our incarcerated brothers and sisters is something that my older brother, Muḥammad, once told me: "The bigger the sinner, the bigger the saint."

Sheikh Saed Ali Kulayni

The Unknown Partner

My name is Saed Ali Kulayni, and many of you may know me as Shaykh Saed or even Shaykh Kulayni. I work alongside Shaykh Mateen Charbeannou at 2nd Chance Books, a subsidiary of Al-Kisa Foundation.

I'm originally from New York City, and I was born into a Sunnī Muslim family from a biracial mother and a Puerto Rican father. When I was 16 or 17 years old, I was inspired by my older brother to convert to Shīʿah Islam. This represented the beginning of my lifelong pursuit of knowledge.

I began my journey in Islamic Studies over 20 years ago when I joined the local ḥawzah (a seminary where Shīʿah scholars are educated). After five years, I completed my initial studies, and I decided to continue my traditional Islamic training in Qum, Iran. Afterward, I returned to the U.S., where I started to teach, write, and engage with local community centers in Atlanta, Georgia. This kickstarted my role as a resident scholar (ʿālim) in two different communities across two different states.

However, I continued to feel the tug of knowledge, so I decided to continue my education. To this day, I travel back and forth from the U.S. to Najaf and Karbalāʾ, the two main hubs of Shīʿah learning in Iraq, to strengthen my knowledge as a servant and leader of Islam.

No matter which community I interact with, the most common question I receive is why did I choose to leave a well-paying job and career behind only to dedicate my time to studying Islam? My answer is always the same: it was something that I needed. It is something that others like me need as well. Growing up, I didn't see other religious leaders that looked like me. There were only a couple second or third-generation Muslim American scholars. Thus, they had a difficult time understanding our unique needs and challenges as second-generation Muslims raised in America. I needed a role model, and when I couldn't find one, I decided to be the change our community needed.

My journey with 2nd Chance was an outlet that I didn't know I needed. The organization found me more than I found it. By chance, I met Shaykh Mateen at an Islamic conference more than 10 years ago. This was before 2nd Chance grew into the non-profit organization that we know today.

As part of the 2nd Chance team, I've witnessed its exponential growth. It started as a one-man initiative and a need to give back to our incarcerated brothers and sisters, and now, it is the largest Shīʿah run program that serves incarcerated Muslims across the United States. I've been able to use my background in running large businesses to grow our organization, alḥamdulillāh. Allah (swt) guided me exactly where I needed to be, and now I have the skills to flourish in my role of serving you all.

Today, I work with Shaykh Mateen to answer all of your questions. I am the story behind the letters. When I'm reading through your powerful backgrounds and pressing questions, I hope to be a source of guidance and light when there doesn't seem to be any. Our ongoing mission at 2nd Chance is to touch all the hearts of our incarcerated brothers and sisters with the pure message of Allah (swt), Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ), and his Ahlul Bayt (ʿa).

My final message to our incarcerated brothers and sisters is something that my older brother, Muḥammad, once told me: "The bigger the sinner, the bigger the saint."

I've pondered over these words for many years. After some reflection, I have deduced that the way we start is not always the way we end. The more we have erred, the more room we have for improvement. We have the greatest ability to enact change within ourselves. We can become better Muslims and believers while holding fast to our roots and where we came from. The key is to hold tight onto the rope of Allah (swt). Yes, sometimes it may be hard. It may even feel impossible, but I'm here to remind you that it is always possible. This is what gives us strength.

As humans, we all have our own unique shortcomings, but every new day is an opportunity to work on them and become stronger than who we were at our lowest moments. Keep focusing on your goals. While your body may be imprisoned, allow your mind and soul to reclaim freedom. In fact, your mind and soul are already free, but they need to be elevated. At 2nd Chance Books, my role is to keep pushing and working hard to ensure that this message reaches you and those people whom everyone else may have forgotten about. I remember you, and I'm praying for you.

The Spiritual Significance of the Event of Ghadīr, and the Guiding Spirit of the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa)

Br Taymaz Tabrizi

Every human thought and desire are part of a larger organized structure of viewing and acting in the world. These come in the form of religions, cultures, and other types of worldviews like secularism, liberalism, atheism, agnosticism, or what have you. Each of these structures of belief, and viewing the world hold within themselves their own metanarratives. Metanarratives are overarching principles and interpretations of one's system of beliefs and practices that give its experiences structure, coherence, and meaning.

If we were to think about Islam's metanarratives, perhaps its most paramount principle would be as follows:

If you are not serving and submitting to Allah (swt), then you have enslaved yourself to other than Allah (swt).

This binary principle is perhaps most pronounced in Qur'ān where Allah (swt) says:

"Allah is the Guardian (Walī) of those who believe. He takes them out of the darkness into the light. And as for those who disbelieve, their guardians are the evil ones (rebels), which take them out of the light into the darkness." [1]

The Qur'ān states that Allah (swt) has not put two hearts in any person.[2] This means that humans cannot have two masters at the same time. They either have Allah (swt) as their master (*mawlā*) and guardian (*walī*); or they have the rebels (*ṭāghūt*) meaning Shayṭān and his henchmen (demons, evil humans, etc.). In other words, they either submit their hearts to the forces of Allah (swt), or they submit to the forces of evil - be they conscious of it or not. Allah's guardianship brings people out of the many darknesses that exist into the one light, whereas the rebels take people out of the light and put them into the darknesses.

1 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 257.
2 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Aḥzāb (33), Verse 4.

Life under Allah's guardianship *(wilāyah)* and light *(nūr)* is a life of inner peace,[3] joy,[4] psychospiritual healing,[5] meaning and purpose,[6] and an Earthly garden (paradise) and Heavenly garden (Paradise)[7] - despite the difficulties and tragedies that one may face. In contrast, life under the rebel's guardianship and darknesses *(ẓulumāt)* is a life in which one will forget oneself[8] and become disconnected from Allah (swt).

Human beings are guided by the principles that sit on top of their hierarchy of values. Whatever is on top of a human's hierarchy of values is what guides one's desires, sense of morality, and purpose in life. It also guides how they perceive the world and act in it; and are in one sense our 'gods' in life and what we worship or submit our hearts to. This is what the Qurʾān sometimes calls "master" *(mawlā/walī)*[9] or a god *(ilāh)*.[10] Without a 'god' or 'object of worship' we cannot function in life, and everything would be in chaos. Sometimes we are not even aware of the 'god' or 'master' that we worship and follow, but nevertheless its unconscious hold determines much of how we think and act in life.

In other words, we may be following the 'god' and 'master' of rebel *(ṭāghūt)* and be in darkness without being aware of it, even if we happen to be an atheist. The Qurʾān thus tells us that our gauge in finding out where our first principles lie is to bring into awareness **who** our hearts are submitted to. Meaning that if it is not Allah (swt) and His system of guardianship *(wilāyah)*, then it is the guardianship of other than Allah (swt), namely that of the principalities of the darknesses *(ṭāghūt/ẓulumāt)*.

We cannot live without having a *mawlā* and system of *wilāyah* in our lives. Allah (swt) outlines His system of *wilāyah* in the Qurʾān. *Wilāyah* is an umbrella term and concept whose peak is Allah (swt). Through His delegates, Allah (swt) guides and inspires people. These include the Prophets (ʿa), angels, sincere believers, and a certain group - who like the Prophets - have been "vested with authority" by Allah (swt), namely the 12 Divinely-appointed Imāms (ʿa).[11]

When Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) was at the end of his blessed life, Allah (swt) made it clear to the Muslims that guidance would not end with his death, but that the line of *wilāyah* would continue through his cousin, son-in-law, and the first Divinely-appointed leader, Imām ʿAlī (ʿa). The Prophet (ṣ) had mentioned this several times during his lifetime that his successor would be Imām ʿAlī (ʿa), but at a pond called Ghadīr he once again emphasized this. The event was as follows:

ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās narrates: "*When the Messenger of Allah was taken on a journey to heaven, Angel Jibrāʾīl (Gabriel) brought him to a river called 'The Light' (An-Nūr), and Allah says in the Qurʾān: 'He made the darknesses and the light'.*[12] *When he (the Prophet) ended up at that river with him, Jibrāʾīl said to him: 'O Muḥammad! Ascend, with the blessings of Allah, for Allah has illuminated your sight and stretched out your purview.' So, the Messenger of Allah ascended until he reached the veils. The veils consisted of five hundred veils, and the distance between each veil was the travel distance of five hundred years. Then, he (the angel) said: 'Proceed, Muḥammad.' So, he (the Prophet) said to him: 'O Jibrāʾīl! Will you not come with me?' He replied: 'It is not (allowed) for me to cross beyond this place.' Then, the Messenger of Allah proceeded as much as Allah wished for him to proceed, until he heard what the Lord said:*

> *'I am the Praiseworthy One (Maḥmūd), and you are the praised one (Muḥammad). I have derived your name from My Name. So whoever connects to you, I connect to them, and whoever cuts you off, I cut them off. Descend to My servants and inform them about how much I have honored you. Surely, I have not sent a Prophet except that I have given him a successor (to lead the people after him).*
>
> *You are My Messenger, and surely ʿAlī is your successor.'"*[13]

3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ar-Raʿd (13), Verse 28.
4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Yūnus (10), Verse 58.
5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Yūnus (10), Verse 57.
6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt (51), Verse 56.
7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ar-Raḥmān (55), Verse 46.
8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥashr (59), Verse 19.
9 The term *mawlā* is derived from *walī* which means 'master, guardian, or leader'. *Wilāyah* also comes from the same root meaning in Arabic.
10 See Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Jāthiyah (45), Verse 23 where Allah (swt) says: *"Have you not seen the one who has taken one's desire to be their god?"*
11 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nisāʾ (4), Verse 59.
12 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anʿām (6), Verse 1.
13 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 37, P. 109

Imām ʿAlī's succession in political affairs was only a small aspect of the responsibility of being a *mawlā*. The wider aspect of being a *mawlā* and *wilāyah* in general is to create a pathway for humans to connect with Allah (swt), enter His light and find salvation. This happens in many ways. It happens through the direct guidance and physical presence of the *mawlā* in question. The guidance also happens through the recorded teachings of the *mawlā* who after the Prophet (ṣ) were the Twelve Imāms (ʿa). For example, just as we have the guidance of the Qurʾān through a physical book, we also have tens of thousands of pages of recorded teachings and wisdom of the Prophet (ṣ) and the Imāms of his Noble Household (Ahlul Bayt) (ʿa) who expounded and explained the Prophet's teachings for more than two centuries after him.

Perhaps the most important form of a *mawlā*'s guidance is his metaphysical guidance. Allah (swt) is the source of all guidance in existence. He guides through revelation (*waḥī*) and inspiration (*ilhām*) as well as other means. Yet in guiding His creation, He uses various delegates such prophets, angels, the Holy Spirit, and others who are part of the larger architecture of providence in the world. Just as the Devil is able to misguide a wide spectrum of humans through his evil whispers (*waswasa*), the *mawlā* of light – under the direction of Allah (swt) - is able to inspire and guide the hearts of humankind towards salvation through his light which he channels from Allah (swt). Through him people receive bounties and grace in the world even if they don't know his name. We know this from the Prophet's own teachings. For example, his companion Jābir ibn ʿAbdullāh once asked him in regard to the benefit of a hidden Imām when the Prophet (ṣ) predicted the coming of the Imām al-Mahdī (ʿaj):

Jābir says: "I said: 'O Messenger of Allah! Will his followers get any benefit from him during his occultation?' (The Prophet (ṣ)) said:

> *'Certainly, by Him Who has sent me with prophethood!*
>
> ***They will be guided by his light and benefit from his wilāyah (love and mastership) during his occultation as people benefit from the sun when it is hidden in clouds.***
>
> *O Jabir! This is part of the hidden secrets of Allah (swt). So keep it hidden except from the people who deserve to know.' "* [14]

Guidance from God exists in a spectrum of potentials. Everyone receives some form of guidance in the world be they Muslim or non-Muslim, Shīʿī or non-Shīʿī. This guidance comes to people whether they are aware of it or not and depending on the state of their hearts, they can find a wide array of benefits. But to expand the spectrum of potential salvation, find a deeper purification of the heart and the healing of one's wounded heart and soul, and avoid the risk of spiritual and psychological pitfalls, one must seek and attach oneself to a map that Allah (swt) has provided us to guide us to Him in the form of *wilāyah* and his representative *mawlā* on earth. Even when we don't have direct physical access to the Imām (ʿaj) and *mawlā*, seeking him and following the teachings of this system of *wilāyah* brings Allah's special grace in our lives and opens the doors of our souls to spiritual inspiration and assistance in our spirits.

14 See the English translation of *Tafsīr Al-Mizan: An Exegesis of the Qurʾān* by Allāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾī (trans. Sa'eed Akhtar Rizvi), Vol. 8, P. 214-215.

The Imām's light talks to us and guides us through so-called 'coincidences' be they a slip in someone's mouth, new insights in the Qur'ān, an inspiring passage in a book or a joyful and life-changing epiphany after experiencing deep pain. Sometimes it is in the healing of fractured relationships after changing and inspiring stubborn hearts or the healing of addictions or the healing of a lifetime of anxiety and depression caused by trauma. He sometimes acts through the guiding conscience of our inner voices, our higher self, our so-called 'gut feelings' and dreams. As the soul becomes more purified, mature, less distracted, and spiritually ascends after much suffering and toil in life, the more frequent and stronger the voices and inspirations become and the better the soul is able to distinguish wrong whims from the inspirations of the light of the *mawlā*.[15]

...[The] ʾa'immah [pl. of Imāms] from Allah (swt) guide people with the truth and with the truth they judge. They are Allah's authority calling people to Him, and shepherds of His creatures. With their guidance people follow the religion and from them the land receives light. Through their holiness the bounties increase. Allah (swt) has made them life for the people and the torches in the darkness, the keys to communication and the strongholds for Islam. Thus have the measures of Allah (swt) continued in them towards His final decision.[16]

– Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq (ʿa)

15 A word of advice: if you find inspiration in your heart for good acts, it is always recommended to check with a scholar before acting on it, especially if it significantly impacts your life.

16 Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī: English Translation* (trans. Muḥammad Sarwar), Vol. 1, P. 184.

Daily Dhikr

There is a short dhikr associated with each day. It is recommended to recite the daily dhikr 100 times on that day.

SATURDAY

يَا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِين

Yā Rabbal-ʿĀlamīn

O Lord of the worlds!

SUNDAY

يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَ الْإِكْرَام

Yā Dhal-Jalāli wal-ʾIkrām

O Owner of majesty and honor!

MONDAY

يَا قَاضِيَ الْحَاجَات

Yā Qāḍiyal-Ḥājāt

O Granter of wishes!

TUESDAY

يَا اَرحَمَ الرَّاحِمِين

Yā Arḥamar-Rāḥimīn

O the Most Merciful of the merciful!

WEDNESDAY

يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوم

Yā Ḥayyu Yā Qayyūm

O the Living, O the Self-subsisting!

THURSDAY

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ الْمَلِكَ الْحَقُّ الْمُبِين

Lā ilāha illallāhul-malikal-ḥaqqul-mubīn

There is no god except Allah, the Master of the clear truth

FRIDAY

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

Allāhumma ṣalli ʿalā Muḥammad wa Āli Muḥammad

O Allah, send blessings upon Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad

Personal Progress Tracker

When one wants to grow closer to their Creator, there is a precursor to that closeness. Firstly, one should strive to understand what responsibilities one must accept in relation to their Creator's commandments. Beyond knowledge of those responsibilities is the implementation and perfection of them. To spiritually progress requires identifying what needs improvement in a person's life. Whether it is to consistently complete one's prayers and abide by the lawful and unlawful, for example, this spiritual building is never-ending and is meant to be a constant work in progress for every believer. That should not deter us from seeking growth, instead, it should inspire us to rise to the challenge. That being said, it is helpful to focus on a larger goal and identify a few weaknesses to work on at a time, instead of a large list that may feel overwhelming.

For your own safe keeping, write some personal reflections below based on the following prompts:

Where are you spiritually, today? Think about the actions that bring you closer to Allah (swt) and how you feel about those, as well as the negative ones that push you away from Allah (swt).

Where would you like to go spiritually, tomorrow? Are there any practical things you can change right now that would assist you in moving toward that direction? What can you keep doing well?

List some personal goals you'd like to achieve:

The following are some of the instructions of scholars on moral and ethical traits for self-development. Three steps are needed to refine the soul after embracing Islam as taught by the Qurʾān and the tradition of the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa): *mushāraṭah*, *murāqabah*, and *muḥāsabah*. We must have intellectual conviction and recognize that faith is not just mental acrobatics or believing deeply in one's heart, but rather it is demonstrated by our actions.

Mushāraṭah is to make a firm intention on a daily basis to stay away from all sin and do all our lawful duties. At the beginning of the day, we can address our nafs (inner self) directly, advising it to stay on the straight path throughout that day.

Setting a firm intention today for:

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My actions requiring murāqabah:

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Murāqabah is one of the pillars of spiritual development. It is remaining vigilant throughout the day so that we avoid sin and ensure we perform our responsibilities. We see ourselves in the presence of Allah (swt) and try not to become heedless of that fact.

Muḥāsabah is to take account of oneself. At the end of the day it is important to review one's actions. If, God forbid, we made a mistake, we should ask for forgiveness. We may retrace our steps and try to look a little deeper to see what caused this slip and address that real core issue. If we see success and the favor of Allah (swt) in doing our responsibilities, we give credit where credit is due. We thank Allah (swt) for the success and praise Him. This helps us develop Islamic self-confidence where we realize Allah (swt) can do great things through us and our hands. His Grace is not limited. If we follow His commands, He will take our hands.

My actions that require muhāsabah:

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Aṣ-Ṣaḥīfah as-Sajjādiyyah is a compilation of supplications from Imām ʿAlī as-Sajjād Zaynul ʿĀbidīn (ʿa), the great grandson of Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ). It is a compilation that appeals to believers in a multitude of their differing states and circumstances. A small review of the supplications will reveal the varying topics and their timeless relevance to the believer's life.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

Bismillāhir Raḥmānir Raḥīm

In the Name of Allah, the All-merciful, the All-compassionate

اِلٰهِيْ!

Ilāhī!

My Allah!

لَيْسَ لِيْ وَسِيْلَةٌ اِلَيْكَ اِلَّا عَوَاطِفُ رَأْفَتِك،

Laysa lī wasīlatun ilayka illā ʿawāṭifu raʾfatik,

I have no mediation with You but the tender acts of Your clemency,

وَلَا لِيْ ذَرِيْعَةٌ اِلَيْكَ اِلَّاعَوَارِفُ رَحْمَتِك،

Wa lā lī dharīʿatun ilayka illā ʿawārifu raḥmatik,

nor any way to come to You but the gentle favors of Your mercy,

وَشَفَاعَةُ نَبِيِّكَ نَبِيِّ الرَّحْمَةِ وَمُنْقِذِ الْأُمَّةِ مِنَ الْغُمَّة،

wa shafāʿatu nabiyyika nabiyyir-raḥmati wa munqidhil-ummati minal-ghummah,

and the intercession of Your Prophet, the prophet of mercy who rescued the nation from confusion.

فَاجْعَلْهُمَا لِيْ سَبَبًا اِلَىٰ نَيْلِ غُفْرَانِك،

Fajʿalhumā lī sababan ilā nayli ghufrānik,

Make these two my means to attain Your forgiveness,

وَصَيِّرْهُمَا لِيْ وُصْلَةً اِلَى الْفَوْزِ بِرِضْوَانِك!

Wa ṣayyirhumā lī wuṣlatan ilal-fawzi bi-riḍwānik!

and let them take me to triumph through Your satisfaction!

وَقَدْ حَلَّ رَجَآئِي بِحَرَمِ كَرَمِك،

Wa qad ḥalla rajāʾī bi-ḥarami karamik,

My hope has dismounted in the sacred precinct of Your generosity,

وَحَطَّ طَمَعِيْ بِفِنَآءِ جُوْدِك.

Wa ḥaṭṭa ṭamaʿī bi-fināʾi jūdik.

my craving has alighted in the courtyard of Your munificence.

فَحَقِّقْ فِيْكَ اَمَلِيْ،

Faḥaqqiq fīka amalī,

So actualize my expectation from You,

وَاخْتِمْ بِالْخَيْرِ عَمَلِيْ.

Wakhtim bil-khayri ʿamalī.

seal my work with good deeds,

وَاجْعَلْنِيْ مِنْ صَفْوَتِكَ الَّذِيْنَ اَحْلَلْتَهُمْ بُحْبُوْحَةَ جَنَّتِك،

Waj-ʿalnī min ṣafwatikal-ladhīna aḥlaltahum buḥbūḥata jannatik,

and place me among Your selected servants, those whom You have set down in the midst of Your Heaven,

وَبَوَّأْتَهُمْ دَارَ كَرَامَتِك،

Wa bawwaʾtahum dāra karāmatik,

and settled in the abode of Your honor,

وَاَقْرَرْتَ اَعْيُنَهُمْ بِالنَّظَرِ اِلَيْكَ يَوْمَ لِقَآئِك،

Wa aqrarta aʿyunahum bin-naẓari ilayka yawma liqāʾik,

whose eyes You have gladdened by gazing upon You on the day we meet,

وَاَوْرَثْتَهُمْ مَنَازِلَ الصِّدْقِ فِيْ جِوَارِك!

Wa awraththtahum manāzilaṣ-ṣidqi fī jiwārik!

and whom You have made heirs to the stations of truth in Your neighborhood!

يَا مَنْ لَا يَفِدُ الْوَافِدُوْنَ عَلَىٰ اَكْرَمَ مِنْه،

Yā man lā yafidul-wāfidūna ʿalā akrama minh,

O best of the generous that can ever be reached by seekers,

وَلَا يَجِدُ الْقَاصِدُوْنَ اَرْحَمَ مِنْه!

Wa lā yajidul-qāṣidūna arḥama minh!

and most merciful who can be reached by those who strive purposefully!

يَا خَيْرَ مَنْ خَلَا بِهِ وَحِيْد،

Yā khayra man khalā bihī waḥīd,

O Best companion to the lonely one,

وَيَا اَعْطَفَ مَنْ آوَىٰ اِلَيْهِ طَرِيْد!

Wa yā aʿṭafa man āwā ilayhi ṭarīd!

O Tenderest of those with whom outcasts seek haven!

اِلَىٰ سَعَةِ عَفْوِكَ مَدَدْتُ يَدِيْ،

Ilā saʿati ʿafwika madadtu yadī,

Toward the expanse of Your pardon have I extended my hand,

وَبِذَيْلِ كَرَمِكَ اَعْلَقْتُ كَفِّيْ!

Wa bi-dhaylī karamika aʿlaqtu kaffī!

upon the skirt of Your generosity have I fastened my grasp!

فَلَا تُوْلِنِي الْحِرْمَان،

Falā tūlinil-ḥirmān,

Show me no deprivation,

وَلَا تُبْلِنِيْ بِالْخَيْبَةِ وَالْخُسْرَان!

Wa lā tublinī bil-khaybati wal-khusrān!

and afflict me not with disappointment and loss!

يَا سَمِيْعَ الدُّعَآء!

Yā samīʿad-duʿāʾ!

O Hearer of supplications!

يَا اَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِيْنَ.

Yā Arḥamar-Rāḥimīn.

O the Most Merciful of those who are merciful.

Riddles

1. Which Sūrah contains the word Allah (swt) in every āyah?

2. What are the rights of a Muslim upon a Muslim?

3. Mr. and Mrs. Musa have 6 daughters and each daughter has 1 brother. How many people are there in the Musa family?

4. I am a precious thread, wrapped around the wrist. Believers wear me, a symbol of their faith and gist. A reminder to be mindful, in all they do and say, I'm tied with love and devotion, every single day.

5. How do you make the number 7 even - without addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division?

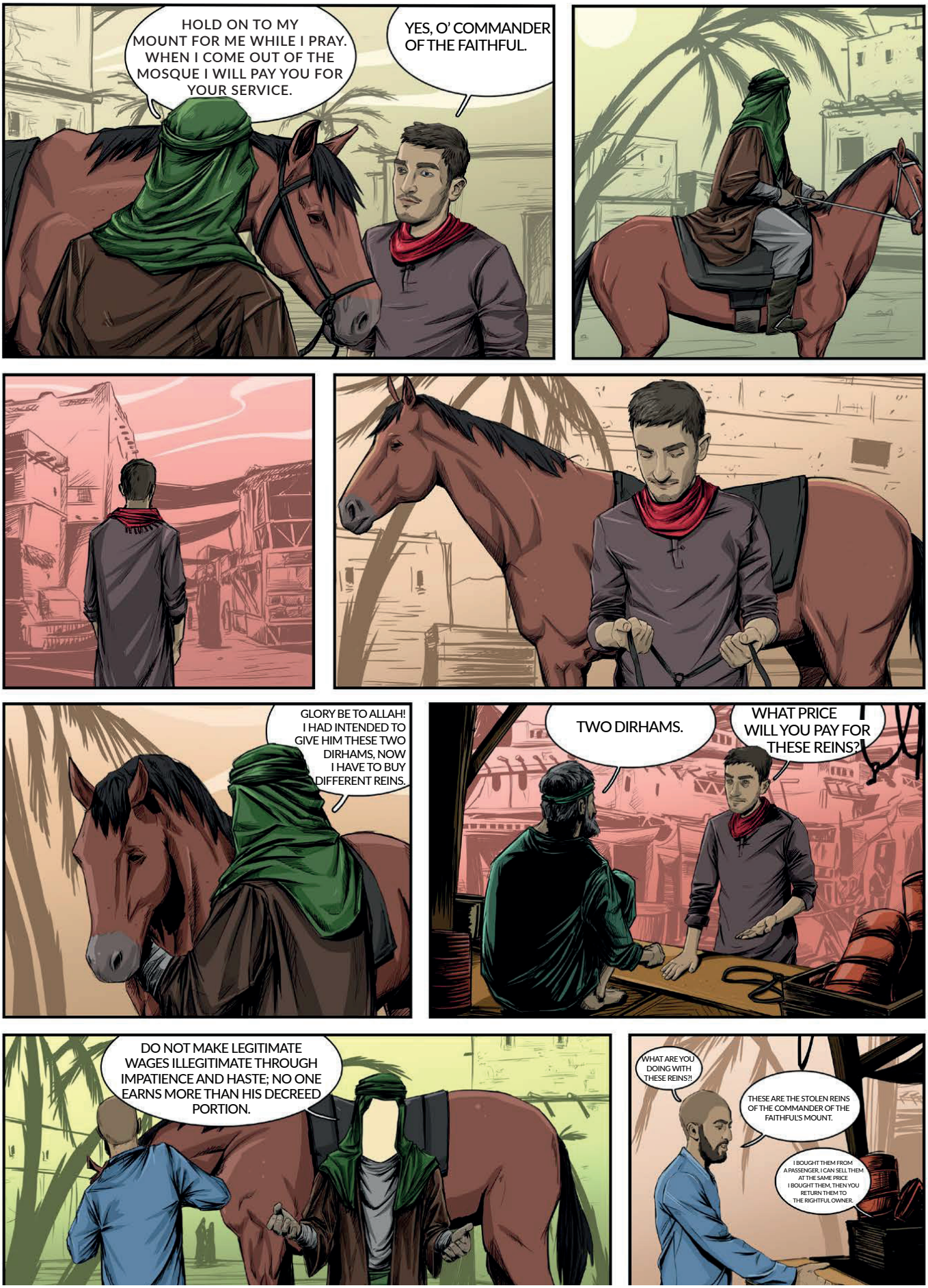
6. What is ḥarām, but when swallowed loved by Allah (swt)?

7. We are not tongues nor have the power to speak, yet we will speak one day as witnesses. Who are we?

ANSWERS

1. Sūrah al-Mujādilah
2. Love for others what you love for yourself
3. There are 9 people in the Musa family. Since each daughter shares the same brother, there are 6 girls, 1 boy, and Mr. and Mrs. Musa.
4. Prayer beads (Sibḥa)
5. Drop the "S"
6. Pride
7. Hands and Legs. "On the day when witness shall be given against them by their tongues, their hands, and their feet concerning what they used to do." Sūrah an-Nūr 24:24

HURRYING AFTER ONE'S DAILY SUSTENANCE


HOLD ON TO MY MOUNT FOR ME WHILE I PRAY. WHEN I COME OUT OF THE MOSQUE I WILL PAY YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE.
YES, O' COMMANDER OF THE FAITHFUL.
GLORY BE TO ALLAH! I HAD INTENDED TO GIVE HIM THESE TWO DIRHAMS, NOW I HAVE TO BUY DIFFERENT REINS.
TWO DIRHAMS.
WHAT PRICE WILL YOU PAY FOR THESE REINS?
DO NOT MAKE LEGITIMATE WAGES ILLEGITIMATE THROUGH IMPATIENCE AND HASTE; NO ONE EARNS MORE THAN HIS DECREED PORTION.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH THESE REINS?!
THESE ARE THE STOLEN REINS OF THE COMMANDER OF THE FAITHFUL'S MOUNT.
I BOUGHT THEM FROM A PASSENGER, I CAN SELL THEM AT THE SAME PRICE I BOUGHT THEM, THEN YOU RETURN THEM TO THE RIGHTFUL OWNER.

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“If you are grateful,
I will surely increase
you [in favor].”
Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Ibrāhīm (14), Verse 7
2ND CHANCE

Transliteration Guide

Arabic terms in this magazine have been transliterated according to the following guidelines:

ء	a, i, or u (initial form)	ظ	ẓ
ء	ʾ (medial or final form)	ع	ʿ
ا	a	غ	gh
ب	b	ف	f
ت	t	ق	q
ث	th	ك	k
ج	j	ل	l
ح	ḥ	م	m
خ	j	ن	n
د	d	ه	h
ذ	dh	و	w
ر	r	ي	y
ز	z	ة	h (without iḍāfah)
س	s	ة	t (with iḍāfah)
ش	sh		
ص	ṣ	ـَـ	a
ض	ḍ	ـِـ	i
ط	ṭ	ـُـ	u

Glossary

Muttaqīn: Those who are conscious of their Creator

Nūr: A spiritual light or aura

ʿibādah: Servitude and worship to the Creator

Next Issue

Steadfastness

Overcoming Difficulties